

he cast his sharp and experienced eye on the military-industrial complex. He always cast a glaring spotlight on concerns when the "grunts" were not getting the equipment they needed to do their jobs.

I extend my deepest condolences to Colonel Hackworth's wife, Eilhys England, and his many children, step-children, grandchildren and step-grandchildren. But of all the tributes I know will come Colonel Hackworth's way, I think the tribute he would appreciate most will be from the average soldier whose loyalty he earned in combat and whose welfare became his life's cause in his retirement, for he knew they are the men and women who are out on point securing our Nation's freedom.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

A 35-year-old gay man was walking to his Boston home when three young men approached him, knocked him to the ground, and repeatedly kicked him in the face. Although he was yelling for help and near several homes, no one came to his aid. The perpetrators fled and left the victim with multiple contusions and internal bleeding in his face. Neither possessions nor money was stolen.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

REPEALING D.C.'S LOCAL GUN SAFETY LAWS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, legislation has been introduced that would repeal nearly every gun safety law in the District of Columbia. Sadly, the bill was introduced during the celebration of National Police Week and just days after 153 law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty in 2004 were honored at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

The misnamed "District of Columbia Personal Protection Act" would repeal local laws in Washington, DC that ban the sale and possession of unregistered firearms, require firearm registration, impose commonsense safe storage requirements, and ban semiautomatic weapons in the District. Should this bill become law, those who live and

work in our Nation's capital as well as tourists and other visitors would face a greater threat of gun violence.

In a statement last week, DC Mayor Anthony Williams said, "I am incensed by any congressional proposal that uses District residents as pawns. I am incensed by any proposal that assaults Home Rule. And I am incensed by any proposal that is an insult to the memory of the people who have died in this city due to gun violence—in particular the three children who have died from gun violence this year."

Instead of interfering in local affairs in Washington, DC, the Senate should focus its energies on legislation on improving the safety of the families and communities across the Nation. The Senate has yet to consider several common sense gun safety measures during this Congress. Among these are proposals that would reauthorize the 1994 assault weapons ban, prohibit the sale of the Five-Seven armor-piercing handgun, and help investigators working to prevent attacks by terrorists using high powered weapons. I urge the Senate to take up and pass these bills to make our Nation safer.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ROBERT FOUST

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I want to pay tribute to an exceptional member of my staff who is retiring at the end of this month after 33 years of service to the Senate.

Bob has worked in the Senate for a period of 40 years, starting as an intern in the 1960s, and then working full time for Senator Claiborne Pell for 19 years from 1970 to 1989. After taking 2 years to travel the world, it was my great good fortune that Bob volunteered to join my staff in the spring of 1991.

At the time, Bob told me he was looking to complete 20 years of Senate service. I do not think either he or I thought that he would be with me for 14 years. But I could not be more pleased that Bob decided to stay.

During his tenure in my office, he has worked on education, veterans, and international affairs issues. His work on all these issues has been outstanding. On veterans and education issues, in particular, he has developed a long list of legislative victories both small and large.

Bob has a gift for seeing legislative opportunities. One example I will never forget involves the V-chip. For years, I had heard from parents, educators, health care professionals and religious leaders about their concerns regarding the influence of television violence on young people. In response, Bob helped me form a steering committee of interested individuals and organizations to talk about possible approaches to help shield children from gratuitous violence on television. And we developed V-chip legislation. During the debate on the 1996 telecommunications bill, I offered my amendment to require that the V-chip be included in TVs so that

parents would have the ability to block out violent shows. When I offered the amendment, the so-called experts told us not to push forward—that the amendment couldn't pass. But Bob advised me to move forward. And when the roll was called, the amendment passed by a strong 73 to 26 margin, and was then enacted into law.

Bob's attention to North Dakota's veterans has paid off in greatly improved facilities around the State. When Bob learned that the VA was considering closing VA facilities that were not up to current standards, he alerted me and helped me lead the fight for a \$12 million renovation at the Fargo VA Medical Center. These renovations, which will be finished later this year, have dramatically improved the facility for our veterans. Bob has also been very concerned about the long travel times facing the many North Dakota veterans who live in rural areas. From his first day in the office, he pushed hard to expand services for rural veterans through the Community Based Outpatient Clinics, CBOCs. To date, as a result of Bob's hard work, we have secured three CBOCs at Minot, Grafton and Bismarck. And the VA's CARES, Capital Assets Realignment for Enhanced Services, Commission has approved five new clinics at Williston, Jamestown, Devils Lake, Grand Forks AFB, and Dickinson. Finally, Bob has had great compassion for the most vulnerable among our veterans—homeless veterans—and has constantly looked for ways to help them. Most recently, he worked with Centre, Inc. in Fargo to shepherd through a \$1.6 million grant to renovate a facility that will house a 48-bed shelter for homeless veterans.

On education, he was constantly looking for ways to help North Dakota's teachers, whether it was bringing information technology to classrooms or advocating for appropriate implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act. Bob conceived of the Rural Education Achievement Program and built a coalition that helped me enact this important legislation during the 106th Congress. Almost 80 percent of North Dakota school districts have 600 students or less. Under the REAP program, small, rural school districts are entitled to consolidate funding from Federal education programs to make more efficient use of the funds. In the first 3 years of the REAP program, more than 270 North Dakota schools benefitted from approximately \$2.7 million in funding.

Bob's commitment to education also carried over to the intern program. As he had in Senator Pell's office, Bob volunteered to coordinate my Washington intern program. Bob devoted significant time and effort to ensuring that interns in my office had a terrific learning experience. In fact, Bob's example has inspired dozens of former interns to seek careers in public service. Interns from 10, 20 and even 30 years ago stop by frequently just to say hello